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**Text from the White House
Office of the Vice President**

NEWS RELEASE:

Vice President Gore Announces New Principles to Maintain Low-Cost Power and Salmon Restoration in the Pacific Northwest

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Washington, DC - Vice President Gore announced today that a new set of principles will enable the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to continue providing low-cost power in the Pacific Northwest while committing necessary funding for salmon restoration in the Columbia River Basin.

The new BPA principles will be used by the agency as it sets new power rates and begins negotiating new power contracts in the coming months. The guidelines anticipate that between 2001 and 2006, BPA will commit from \$438 million to \$721 million a year to fish and wildlife efforts.

"These principles represent another major step by this Administration to ensure the health of both the economy and the environment of the Pacific Northwest," said the Vice President, who met September 13 in Seattle with local business, environmental and government leaders to discuss coastal salmon issues.

"We are working closely with all parties to develop a long-term strategy to restore the region's precious salmon runs," the Vice President said. "Today's announcement is an important interim step that protects the needs of power users while bolstering salmon restoration efforts. It also ensures that BPA will continue meeting its obligations to the U.S. Treasury."

BPA, a federal agency under the U.S. Department of Energy, operates 29 hydroelectric dams in the Columbia River basin and markets wholesale electrical power to more than 130 utilities in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

Federal decisions on potential changes in management of the Columbia and Snake River dams to aid threatened and endangered salmon are due in late 1999. BPA, however, must establish new rates and begin contracting for the sale of power before that date.

The BPA guidelines, building on an interagency funding agreement announced by the Vice President in October 1995, are designed to ensure that BPA's new power contracts preserve all options for salmon restoration now under review. They were developed in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"The principles address the needs we heard during nine months of meetings with federal, state and tribal fish agencies and the public," said BPA Administrator Judi Johansen. "Since we don't yet know what the costs will be, we plan to take into account the full range of salmon recovery measures now under consideration."

At the same time, BPA aims to hold wholesale power rates stable and below prevailing market levels between 2001 and 2006. "Our plan includes new power marketing tools that we believe will give us the flexibility to meet fish obligations while keeping power rates stable," Johansen said.

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